



CCGNRC Report 2012
COAST GUARD NATIONAL RETIREE COUNCIL

"Coast Guard For'er"

Co-chairs
RADM Ronald F. Silva, USCG Retired
MCPOCG Vincent W. Patton, USCG, Retired

9 June 2012

To: Commandant (CG-00)

Via: Assistant Commandant for Human Resources (CG-1)

Subj: 2012 NATIONAL RETIREE COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

1. The Commandant of the Coast Guard National Retiree Council (CCGNRC) held its eleventh annual meeting in accordance with COMDTINST 1800.5F from 1-3 May 2012 at Coast Guard Headquarters (Jemal Building). Attendees are listed in the agenda, enclosure (1).
2. To accomplish its purpose as the representative of the Coast Guard Retiree Community charged to develop Coast Guard (CG) Retiree issues and make recommendations to the Commandant, the Council had an ambitious four part agenda:
 - **Project to Improve the CG Retiree Services Program** – The Council was briefed on the Project by the Project Officer, CDR Terry Douglas. The Council was provided the draft COMDTINST 1800.5G which we reviewed, discussed and developed Council recommendations. The Council's view was that the draft COMDTINST 1800.5G with our recommendations provides a viable framework for an Improved CG Retirees Services Program.
 - **Retiree Advocacy and Issues/Recommendations Development Work** – The Council established three standing committees which met in group workshops and in plenary sessions to discuss the needs of the CG Retiree Community and developed [ten CCGNRC 2012 Retiree Issues and Recommendations for Commandant review and approval](#), enclosure (2). The Committees are:
 - **Benefits and Entitlements Committee**
 - **Outreach and Volunteer Services Committee**
 - **USCG Retiree Services and Program Committee**
 - **Retiree Council Informational Briefings** – The Council was briefed by staffs and organizations within and external to the Coast Guard. These briefings provided reference info for the CCGNRC members, as well as establishing a better understanding of Retiree issues and potential recommendations. The agenda, enclosure (1), lists the briefings.
 - **Coast Guard Senior Leadership meetings** – The Council appreciates meeting with the following CG Senior Leaders and notes their support of Retiree affairs:
 - Vice Commandant – VADM Brice O-Hara
 - DCMS – VADM Currier
 - CG-1 acting – Mr Curt Odom
 - CG-6 – RADM R Day
 - CG-13 –RADM S Day
 - CMC Vanderwerf (representing the MCPOCG)
 - MCPO-CGRF Allen

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3. The Council acknowledges and appreciates the strong leadership, support and action on Coast Guard Retiree affairs by our Commandant, ADM Papp, over the past year and notes that his absence was due to a medical issue.
4. The following are action items that the Council discussed and committed for action:
 - Review and provide recommendations for draft COMDTINST 1800.5G to the CG Retirees Services Program Project Officer by 11 May 2012 (CCGNRC Co-Chairs provided recommendations to the Project Officer on 10 May 2012).
 - Transmit the CCGNRC developed CG Caregivers Guide to CG-1 by 1 July 2012. [Recommend CG-1 take ownership of this document and establish the appropriate means to implement and update in the future, with CCGNRC support and consultation.](#)
 - Meet with incoming CG-1, RADM Neptun, as part of his in-brief process to get him up to speed on CG Retiree Affairs issues by 30 June 2012.
 - As the representative of the CG Retiree Community and as subject matter experts on many Retiree Affairs matters, stay engaged and participate with CG-1 staff personnel for COMDTINST 1800.5G development and execution for relevancy, needs of retirees, effectiveness and efficiency. [Recommend CG-1 ensure proactive and effective communications between the CG-1 staff and the CCGNRC Co-Chairs on a regular and ongoing basis for the partnership needed for planning and implementing an effective CG Retiree Services Program.](#)
5. **Summary.**
 - The Council acknowledges the current resource constraints that the Coast Guard is experiencing. However, the Council strongly advocates an improved CG Retiree Services Program, as is being defined in the draft COMDTINST 1800.5G, with defined roles and responsibilities, better organization, consolidated pre-retirement, transition and post-retirement services, better/more use of Retiree services at DoD Bases, coverage for support of all CG Retirees defined by CG Base AORs, expanding and enabling CG Regional Retiree Councils for more retiree volunteerism. This can be achieved with minimal investment and, will pay big dividends for the Coast Guard and its Retirees, be a force multiplier, serve as a positive example to the active duty that their connection to the CG does not end at retirement, and strengthen “the long blue line” CG culture.
 - The Council is very excited about this opportunity to improve the Coast Guard Retiree Program and stands ready to assist in making it a reality.
6. The Council would like to thank Mr. Clifford Samuel and especially CWO Joey Brown for their diligent work in preparations and support for the CCGNRC 2012 meeting. BZ!



Ronald F. Silva



Vincent W. Patton

Enclosures:

- (1) CCGNRC 2012 Agenda
- (2) CCGNRC 2012 Retiree Issues and Recommendations

Commandant of the Coast Guard

National Retiree Council

Annual Meeting 2012

Jemal Building, 10th Floor, Room 10-0718



Monday, 30 April: Travel Day – Members arrive at Virginian Suites Hotel

1830 – Welcome Aboard Reception
Sponsored by National Association of Uniformed
Services (NAUS) * Hospitality Suite – Hotel*

ATTENDEES

RADM Ron Silva
MCPOCG Vince Patton
RADM Bert Kinghorn
Ms. Susan Baicar
Ms. Lula Carpenter
CAPT Bud Schneeweis
CPO Penny Collins
SCPO Mike White
CAPT David Bernstein
CDR Don Goldstein
CAPT Terry Gilbreath
CAPT Bill Wilkins
CAPT Kenneth Harrison
MCPO Bobby Wester
CAPT Bud Buechler
CDR Sal Romo
CWO Fred Siegel
MCPO Doug Squires
CAPT Robert Warakomsky

CCGNRC Co-Chair
CCGNRC Co-Chair
Pacific Northwest (D13)
Civilian Retiree Council Liaison
Annuitant at Large
Military Service Organization/MOAA
Military Service Organization/FRA
Capital Area
Capital Area
Tampa/St. Petersburg
Central Gulf Coast/Mobile
North Coast (D9)
Greater Miami
First Coast (Jacksonville, FL)
Yorktown
Northern California (D11)
Council-at-Large
Tidewater
National CG Retiree Help Desk Rep

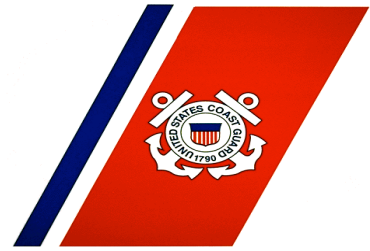
Enclosure (1)

Commandant of the Coast Guard

National Retiree Council

Annual Meeting 2012

Jemal Building, 10th Floor, Room 10-0718



Tuesday, 1 May:

- 0715 – Depart Hotel
- 0815 – Welcome & Introductions
Review Agenda/2011 Report
→ *RADM Silva/MCPOCG Patton*
- 0830 – Welcome Aboard
→ *Mr. Odom (Acting, CG-1)/ RADM Day (CG-13)*
- 0900 – Administration & Logistics
→ *Mr. Cliff Samuel*
- 0915 – *Break*
- 0930 – Army Retirement Services
→ *Mr. John Radke*
- 1030 – Report on Project to Improve the CG Retiree Services Program → *Mr. Odom/CDR Terry Douglas*
- 1200 – Lunch – *hosted by FRA*
→ *Mr. Joe Barnes*
- 1300 – CCGNRC Standing Committees Introduction
→ *RADM Silva/MCPOCG Patton*
- 1400 – *Break*
- 1415 - CCGNRC Standing Committee Workshops (3)**
Discuss Issues → *Committee Co-Chairs*
- 1530 – Meet with Vice Commandant
- 1630 – Adjourn

****Break out rooms: 10-1321 and 10-1436**

Enclosure (1)

Commandant of the Coast Guard

National Retiree Council

Annual Meeting 2012

Jemal Building, 10th Floor, Room 10-0718



Wednesday, 2 May:

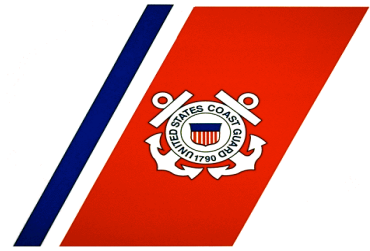
- 0700 – Depart Hotel
- 0745 - Review/Preps for Day
 - *RADM Silva/MCPOCG Patton*
- 0800 – PPC – Retiree and Annuitant Service
 - Presented by: *Ms. Debbie Farley*
- 0830 – *RADM Robert Day (CG-6)*
- 0915 - National Association of Uniformed Services (NAUS)
 - *Mr. Mike Plumer/LCDR Steve Hein, USCG (ret)*
- 1000 – *Break*
- 1015 – Caregiver's Guide
 - Presented by: *Bruce Russell/Bud Schneeweis*
- 1045- Military Coalition – MOAA/FRA Legislative Brief
 - *Mr. Phil Odom(MOAA) & Mr. John Davis (FRA)*
- 1130 – Depart for Flag Mess
- 1200 – MOAA Reception in Flag Mess
- 1300 – MCPOCG Representative/ *CMC Terence Vanderwerf*
 - Room 6103 (Transpoint building)
- 1400 – *VADM Currier*
 - Room 6103 (Transpoint building)
- 1445 – Return to Jemal/break
- 1500 - TRICARE North
 - *LT Max Ortiz, CG Liaison*
- 1600 - Public Affairs
 - *Ms. Angela Hirsch*
- 1630 – Adjourn

Commandant of the Coast Guard

National Retiree Council

Annual Meeting 2012

Jemal Building, 10th Floor, Room 10-0718



Thursday, 3 May:

- 0715 – Depart Hotel
- 0800 – Review COMDTINST 1800.5 (draft)
→ *RADM Silva/MCPOCG Patton*
- 0845- Retiree Help Desk
→ *CAPT Robert Warakomsky*
- 0900 – Community Services Command
→ *CAPT Robert McKenna*
- 0930 – *Break*
- 0945 – CCGNRC Standing Committee Workshops (3)**
Develop Recommendations → *Committee Co-Chairs*
- 1100 – CCGNRC Standing Committee Workshops (3) Brief
Out to full CCGNRC → *Committee Co-Chairs*
- 1200 Lunch
- 1300 – CG-094M-LA - Legal Assistance
→ *Mr. Christopher Dunne*
- 1330 - Work Life
→ *Mr. Robert Skewes*
- 1415 – *Break*
- 1500 – Develop topic list for report
→ *RADM Silva/MCPOCG Patton*
- 1545 - Travel Claims/Admin/Surveys
→ *CWO Joey Brown*
- 1600 – Closing Remarks
→ *RADM Silva/MCPOCG Patton*

****Break out rooms: 10-1321 and 10-1426**

Friday, 4 May: Travel Day; Have a Safe Trip Home

CCGNRC 2012 Retiree Issues and Recommendations

CCGNRC Issue 2012-1: Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Impact on Coast Guard Retiree Councils

Issue: During the process to plan for and develop an Improved Coast Guard Retiree Services Program, the CG-094 staff determined that there are Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) impacts/restrictions on the CG Retiree Councils. In short, the general rule of FACA is that non-federal employees cannot give consensus "advice" to the government, and the government may not act on their recommendations unless the committee, group, etc. is established under FACA or is exempt from FACA.

Discussion: DoD Retiree Councils (Army, Air Force, and Navy/Marine Corps) use 10 USC 1783, which authorizes advisory committees to support military families, as a means to exempt their Retiree Councils from the FACA requirement. "A committee within the Department of Defense which advises or assists the Department in the performance of any function which affects members of military families and which includes members of military families in its membership shall not be considered an advisory committee under section 3(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) solely because of such membership."

We have been advised by CG-094 that "Since the Commandant of the Coast Guard National Retiree Council (CCGNRC) is a committee comprised of non-Federal employees established by the Coast Guard that provides consensus advice to Federal officials; it must be established in accordance with FACA." Apparently, that process would involve DHS and maybe the White House approval and lots of reporting requirements. Additionally, we are advised that there is no authority for the Coast Guard to exempt the CG Retiree Councils from FACA.

To comply with FACA, for the 2012 CCGNRC annual meeting and resulting report, the retired CCGNRC Co-Chairs were recalled for the duration of the meeting so they could prepare the report and advise the Commandant as active duty members.

Additionally, the draft COMDTINST 1800.5G is being written without the language that articulates the primary function of the CCGNRC and Regional CG Retiree Councils, which is to advise Coast Guard Senior Leaders on CG Retiree Affairs.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard prepare and obtain approval of a legislative change proposal (to Congress) that will allow the USCG to be in parity with the DoD 10 USC 1783 exemption, so that the CCGNRC and Regional CG Retiree Councils can properly accomplish their primary mission.

Enclosure (2)

CCGNRC Issue 2012-2: Infrastructure In Support of Two-Way Communications with the CG Retiree

Issue: CG Retirees feel detached and ultimately lose interest in maintaining contact with the Coast Guard primarily due to the lack of an organized, reliable, informative, multifaceted communications path to and from the Coast Guard.

Discussion: Communications with CG Retirees is very limited and spotty, primarily the Retiree Newsletter, www.uscg.mil/retiree and, where they exist, Regional Council e-mails. CG Retirees need a multifaceted, multichannel communications path both to and from the Coast Guard due to diverse needs ... ranging from many who are not computer literate while others, primarily recent Retirees, who are highly conversant with electronic social media like Facebook, Twitter, text messaging, and email. An effective communication infrastructure must be flexible to consider the message being sent, the individual Retiree capabilities/needs and the best methods to connect the two. A message on a change of benefits may be best sent via the CG Retiree Newsletter but announcing a local Retiree Appreciation Day in Mobile, AL may require use of social media or email to those CG Retirees in the Mobile locale.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard:

1. Develop and deploy with the review and advice of the CCGNRC an integrated two-way communications infrastructure to support the Retiree Service Office (RSO). That infrastructure must include:
 - a. An integrated Website established and supported by the CG which provides information on Retiree benefits and affairs as well as items of general interest about the CG. The Website should have "links to" for every CG RSO so they may communicate 'local' events & announcements.
 - b. A communications infrastructure providing for the use of email (RSOs to Retiree and response) and social media capability.
 - c. A capability to communicate among & between RSOs and Regional Retiree Councils to promote sharing and collaboration.
 - d. A Help Desk capability to facilitate answering Retiree questions and resolving Retiree issues (see details in **CCGNRC Issue 2012-5: Who're You Gonna Call?**)
2. Define the parameters for communicating CG information of interest to CG Retirees so they are informed and feel part of the CG family.
3. The existence of the two-way communications infrastructure and the importance of its use must be communicated to future CG Retirees at TAPS programs.
4. Until this is fully included in the TAPS program, ensure a 1-page handout on Coast Guard communications with Retirees is given to each retiree. Revise the retirement check-off sheet to include the handout.

Enclosure (2)

CCGNRC 2012-3: Limit Tricare Fee Increases for the Coast Guard Retirees

Issue: Coast Guard Retirees are very concerned about the specter of significant increases in their costs to use Tricare. The administration's proposal to allow Tricare fees to rise at the rate of medical inflation will quickly erode the purchasing power of military retired pay.

Discussion: TRICARE Prime and Prescription fees have recently increased. Current legislation could impact other related TRICARE fees. As an example, congressional legislation has proposed a \$200 annual fee for TRICARE for Life. These possible fee increases will have undesirable impacts on CG Retirees, especially those on fixed incomes. The CCGNRC thinks that an inordinate increase in TRICARE fees for those who have earned retiree status is inappropriate. Military retirees and their families have earned their coverage through decades of service and sacrifice. The Coast Guard and the nation, as good faith employers, have an obligation to retired service members and their families. Reducing military benefits may hinder recruiting and retention, and decrease morale for active duty and retirees.

The CCGNRC realizes that the cost of healthcare continues to rise, and that the military should not necessarily be completely shielded from these increases. However, the CCGNRC also recognizes that military retirees pre-paid significant premiums for their healthcare through frequent deployments, hazardous duties and difficult environmental conditions, sometimes in harm's way. These duties have taken a significant toll on many Coast Guard retirees' health.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Commandant of the Coast Guard support the position espoused by the Military Coalition, which supports modest increases in Tricare fees tied to the annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) applied each year to military retired pay. Also, recognizing that the Tricare for Life (TFL) program is a major driver of Tricare costs, the Council believes that a modest enrollment fee is acceptable. The enrollment fee proposed for FY-2013 is a reasonable base line, but future fees for TFL should be capped at the FY-2013 proposed amount, save for COLA-based increases in the out years.

Enclosure (2)

CCGNRC Issue 2012-4: Encouraging CG Retiree use of Local DoD Base Retiree Information, Activities, Events, and Services

Issue: Information on retiree services available at many DoD Bases is not readily or easily available to CG Retirees within the AOR of the DoD Base contributing to CG Retirees not taking advantage of many Retiree benefits and services.

Discussion: Many CG Retirees are not aware of and do not take advantage of an extensive amount of retiree services, activities, and information currently available to all military retirees at DoD Bases. Presently, some of our Regional CG Retiree Councils have websites, mailing lists and email 'bang list' to pass the word. There are, however large areas not served by Regional CG Retiree Councils, and many CG Retirees do not receive this information on a continuing basis. We need a uniform method of gathering, organizing and disseminating local DoD Base Retiree activities, events and services to the CG Retiree.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard establish a CG Retiree Services Office (RSO) on every CG Base. Task the CG RSO to initiate and maintain contact with every major DoD Base, where sufficient CG Retirees reside, in their AOR to gather and disseminate ongoing, current information on Retiree information, activities, events and services of the DoD Bases within their AOR pertinent to the CG Retiree and encourage the CG Retiree to use these services and facilities.

Regional CG Retiree Councils will, where applicable, support the CG RSO in maintaining contact with DoD Base Retiree Councils and supporting events of various kinds such as Retiree Appreciation Days.

In some situations, a major CG Unit is the only military facility in an area (i.e. Alameda, CA and Elizabeth City, NC). In that case, the CG should reciprocate and invite DoD retirees in the local area to the CG facility for eligible services as appropriate.

Outcomes include:

- CG Retirees using DoD Retiree Services at DoD Bases.
- Where Regional CG Retiree Councils exist, possibly reducing RSO direct workload through delegation of some appropriate functions & augmentation by Council membership
- CG RSO will have current information when assisting CG Retirees.
- Providing incentive for CG Retirees to establish & maintain connection with CG RSOs since they receive information of value on continuing basis.

Enclosure (2)

CCGNRC Issue 2012-5 Who're You Gonna Call?

Issue: Every Coast Guard Retiree needs a place to “call” when they have CG Retirees Services needs and when they don’t know where to call; it creates a “crisis.” This place to call needs to be an official Coast Guard source which is widely known by the CG Retiree Community.

Discussion: When a CG Retiree has a question or issue involving pay, they call the CG Pay and Personnel Center (PPC). For many other Retiree issues, there is not a widely recognized source for the answers to essential questions. The CG Retiree National Help Desk, which is managed and operated by the CCGNRC is a precursor to the final product, and points the way ahead.

However, there are two problems with the CCGNRC run CG National Help Desk both due to the fact that the Help Desk is managed and operated by Retiree volunteers. One is access to current Retiree Services information and points of contact for an extensive number of Retiree Issues, resulting in quality control issues. Currently, the main function of the CG Retiree National Help Desk is to point Retirees in the right direction to get their issue handled. The ability of the Help Desk is limited to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Guide which was developed as a tool for watchstanders. The second issue is that of liability of the volunteer Retiree watchstanders, as well as the entire volunteer Retiree CCGNRC organization, by attempting to provide assistance and advice to Retirees without being under the oversight and administration of a Coast Guard Retiree Services Program. This oversight is necessary to provide legal cover for the volunteer Retiree Help Desk watchstanders and CCGNRC organization.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard implement a phased approach to improve the ability of CG Retirees to get answers to their Retiree Services questions and get issues resolved in a timely fashion. The phases are:

1. The new CG Retiree Services Program Manager takes oversight and administration of the CG Retiree National Help Desk. The Help Desk will still be managed and staffed by volunteer Retirees. The new CG Retiree Services Program Manager will widely advertise the availability of the Help Desk to the CG Retiree Community. The Program staff will also improve the tools that Help Desk uses to field Retiree questions and resolve issues. These tools will become the foundation to jump start implementing the new CG Base RSOs.
2. When the new CG base RSOs are up and running a cut over can be made to the support provided by the new RSOs and when completed, the National Help Desk will be discontinued. Recommend following the Work-Life access model and have one toll-free telephone number that any retiree would call followed by an extension for the appropriate RSO. Recommend using the current Help Desk phone number, (866) 664-6245; with extensions for each RSO (i.e. RSO Boston (xxx), RSO Portsmouth (xxx), RSO Miami (xxx), etc.) to make it a seamless transition for the CG Retiree Community.

CCGNRC Issue 2012-6: Use of Retiree Volunteers to Support Coast Guard and Retiree Activities

Issue: As the Coast Guard establishes and implements the Retiree Service Office (RSO) at CG Bases, there needs to be a partnership established and maintained between the newly established CG RSO and their respective Regional CG Retiree Council to better facilitate and enable the CG Retiree Community for “Giving back to the CG” opportunities to support CG and Retiree activities.

Discussion: Regional CG Retiree Councils, where they currently exist, have been trying to support CG Retirees for many years, by keeping CG Retirees connected with the CG and informed on local issues and local DOD services and events. Currently, the CG has no integrated CG Retiree support structure in place, but is initiating such a structure which is being defined in the new COMDTINST 1800.5G.

When the CG RSO structure is implemented, the RSOs will incrementally assume and expand on virtually all the functions that the current Regional CG Retiree Councils provide, including the National CG Retiree Help Desk. As the CG faces resource constraints, the RSO will likely require staff augmentation and the Regional CG Retiree Council represents a source of that augmentation, as well as possibly, CG Reservists, CG Auxiliarists, etc.

The CG RSO, in partnership with their respective Regional CG Retiree Councils should facilitate and enable the integration of Retirees into the services provided by the RSO. This should be a planned and managed activity and not merely an “ad-hoc” sporadic augmentation.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard optimize opportunities for Retiree volunteerism through:

1. A planned, well-defined implementation of the RSO function
2. Involvement of the CCGNRC and respective Regional CG Retiree Councils in the planning & implementation of the new CG Retiree Service Program structure
3. A planned integration of CG Retirees in the phased implementation and ongoing operation of the RSO based on projected workload, creating opportunities for Retirees to continue their voluntary service.
4. A partnership between the new CG RSO and its respective Regional CG Retiree Councils to identify appropriate CG and Retiree activities and events where CG Retiree are provided meaningful opportunities to “give back and stay connected with the CG”.

CCGNRC Issue 2012-7: Establish a Regional CG Retiree Councils Model

Issue: Should there be Regional and Local CG Retiree Councils with a hierarchy of councils? Should all Regional CG Retiree Councils be represented in person at the CCGNRC?

Discussion: If it is perceived that some Regional CG Retiree Councils (RCGRC)s are senior or more important and some are junior or subservient, it is believed that many Regional CG Retiree Councils will become inactive. If all Regional CG Retiree Councils are viewed and treated as equal and supported adequately, it is believed that more new Regional CG Retiree Councils will be formed where there are a large number of CG Retirees.

Attendance at the CCGNRC Annual Meeting is a separate issue. Where there is more than one Regional CG Retiree Council in a CG Base AOR, the CG Base Commanding Officer will pick the Co-Chair who will represent the AOR at the CCGNRC Annual Meeting. The CG Base Commanding Officer should be encouraged to rotate CG Base AOR Retiree representation from year to year with the RCGRC Co-Chairs.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard through the new COMDTINST 1800.5G require that each CG Base RSO establish and maintain at least one Regional CG Retiree Council in their AOR and be encouraged to facilitate the formation of Regional CG Retiree Councils wherever there is interest and/or need. All Regional CG Retiree Councils will be treated equally, and provided the same level of support.

If there is more than one Regional CG Retiree Council in a CG Base RSO's AOR, the CG Base Commanding Officer will select one Council to attend the CCGNRC Annual Meeting each spring. While the selection will be up to the CG Base Commanding Officer, they will be encouraged to rotate attendance at the CCGNRC Annual Meeting among all Regional CG Retiree Councils in their AOR.

CCGNRC Issue 2012-8: Ownership of Draft *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide*

Issue: After identifying a void in the support of the Coast Guard Retiree Community, the CCGNRC drafted a *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide* to fill that void.

Discussion: The CCGNRC anticipates that the *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide* will serve the needs of Coast Guard Retirees whose caretakers are unfamiliar with military benefits and entitlements. This is an important and growing need as the people in the US (including our Coast Guard Retirees) are living longer and requiring more elder care. It is hard enough for the Coast Guard Retiree to know where to get information on their military benefits and entitlements after separating from the Coast Guard and extremely difficult for a non-military caregiver to understand these military benefits and entitlements. The *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide* provides an important tool to assist elderly Coast Guard Retirees or Annuitants and their caregivers.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard Retiree Services Program Manager assume ownership of the *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide*, after the CCGNRC submits to CG-1 by 1 July 2012, and keep the *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide* up-to-date. It is recommended that the Program Manager partner with the CCGNRC whenever a review or changes are required and the CCGNRC will assist in identifying to the Program Manager additions or changes needed in the *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide*. Additionally, the CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center (PPC) assume responsibility for posting this *Coast Guard Caregivers' Guide* on their web site.

CCGNRC Issue 2012-9: Ownership of *Coast Guard Survivors Guide*

Issue: The *Coast Guard Survivors Guide* is an important document to the survivors of Coast Guard retirees. It is currently owned and maintained by the Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center (PPC). However, there are numerous items in the *Coast Guard Survivors Guide* that are beyond the pay and other subject matter expertise located at the PPC.

Discussion: During the 2011 CCGNRC annual meeting, the CCGNRC identified that the *Coast Guard Survivors Guide* needed to be updated. Over the course of the last year, the CCGNRC worked with the PPC for this update. It became clear through this effort that there are numerous items in the *Coast Guard Survivors Guide* that are beyond the pay and other subject matter expertise located at the PPC. The *Coast Guard Survivors Guide* must be kept up-to-date, and its provisions should be highlighted at least once each year in the *Retiree Newsletter*. Additionally, many Coast Guard Retirees do not know of its existence, even though a copy is made available to Coast Guardsmen upon retirement. The *Coast Guard Survivors Guide* is an important tool that needs better marketing and needs to be kept current to be effective.

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard Retiree Services Program Manager assume ownership of the *Coast Guard Survivors Guide*, and keep it up-to-date. It is recommended that the Program Manager partner with the CCGNRC whenever a review or changes are required and the CCGNRC will assist in identifying to the Program Manager additions or changes needed in the *Coast Guard Survivors Guide*. Additionally, the CCGNRC recommends that the Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center (PPC) assume responsibility for posting the *Coast Guard Survivors Guide* on their web site.

CCGNRC Issue 2012-10: Concern over Proposed Military Retirement System Changes

Issue: Proposed changes to the military retirement system and the proposals for the process for making these changes are causing concern for both Coast Guard Retirees and Active Duty personnel.

Discussion: The military retirement system is the primary incentive to offset adverse conditions of military service present today. However, in an effort to reign in defense spending, the DoD has proposed another study of the military retirement system. The administration also proposed a 12-month BRAC (base realignment and closure)-like commission to prepare a report about the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization, and a fast-track procedure in Congress to consider any legislative change. The CCGNRC believes that 12 months is an insufficient time for consideration of an issue with this big of an impact to the Coast Guard, and the Congressional *Expedited Consideration* privilege, which bars amendments and limits debate, inappropriate for any legislation regarding military retired pay. Together, the requests offer Congress a shield from political pressure by limiting discussion about proposals fundamental to the security of the nation. The CCGNRC strongly objects to limiting essential congressional oversight in this way on an issue so essential to long-term retention and readiness

Recommendation of Desired Outcomes: The CCGNRC recommends that the Commandant of the Coast Guard use every opportunity to appraise DoD Leadership, administration officials, and congressional leaders of the risks associated with any “fast-track” approach to changing the military retirement system in a way that could adversely impact long term retention and readiness. The CCGNRC recommends that any initiative that risks attracting and retaining Coast Guardsmen be strongly opposed. We only have to look back to the retirement REDUX program of 1986 to find evidence of harm a change to retirement pay can have on the readiness of the force. In addition, any official suggestions or recommended initiatives that cause Coast Guard retired pay and benefits to mirror that of corporate professionals should also be strongly opposed.